



## Energy and Environmental Affairs

🏠 EEA Home > DER Awards \$50,000 to Towns to Replace Culverts

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## Baker-Polito Administration Awards \$50,000 to Municipalities to Restore Rivers by Replacing Outdated Infrastructure

**BOSTON** – The Baker-Polito Administration today announced two grants totaling \$50,000 for culvert replacements to improve municipal infrastructure and river health. Awarded through the Division of Ecological Restoration's (DER) Stream Continuity Program, the towns of Brookfield and Boxford will each receive \$25,000 to replace degraded culverts with structures that meet the Massachusetts River and Stream Crossing Standards. Additionally, DER will use the projects to train other municipalities' public works staff on culvert replacements.

"The Baker-Polito Administration is proud to help the towns of Brookfield and Boxford with important infrastructure upgrades that will provide connectivity to critical river and wetland habitats and support storm readiness," **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. "These grants also provide a great training opportunity for municipal road managers to learn about best practices for culvert replacement."

These projects will also be placed into the DER Culvert Replacement Training Project, which trains local road managers and superintendents on best practices for culvert replacement. The projects will serve as case studies and training locations for nearby municipalities' public works staff.

"River restoration through culvert replacement provides multiple benefits to the ecosystem including improved water quality and expanded habitat for aquatic organisms, while improving fishing opportunities for anglers," **said Department of Fish and Game Commissioner George N. Peterson, Jr.**

Nearly half of Massachusetts' estimated 30,000 culverts are undersized and barriers to fish and wildlife movement. Undersized culverts are also a serious risk to public safety, as increased rainfall amounts causes water to overtop roads. Replacing culverts to meet the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards allow streams to flow more naturally, which allows for fish and storm waters to pass more easily. Recent studies also show the culverts that meet these standards are less expensive than traditional or in-kind culvert replacements over the life of the replacement.

DER's Stream Continuity Program helps municipalities replace undersized culverts with better designed structures that meet ecological and public safety criteria, ultimately resulting in improvements to stream connectivity and a reduction in roadway and flood hazards.

"Culverts are critical pieces of infrastructure for the management of water flows and our environment, yet they are costly for municipalities to replace, repair and maintain," **said State Senator Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester)**. "Boxford is clearly focused on getting the job done, and this state investment will make sure that happens."

"This is a win-win for Boxford and the Commonwealth as we'll be improving our infrastructure while also protecting our environment," **said State Representative Leonard Mirra (R-West Newbury)**. "We greatly appreciate these efforts from the Baker-Polito Administration."

"I appreciate the support of the Baker-Polito Administration and the Department of Fish and Game on recognizing the difficulties our communities face in trying to preserve habitat and water quality," **said State Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer), Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture**. "The Brookfield Highway Department works hard on infrastructure and this funding for culverts will be well used."

"Congratulations to the Town of Brookfield on receiving this grant award through the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration," **said State Representative Donald Berthiaume (R-Spencer)**. "Brookfield has many wetland areas and waterways that will benefit greatly from this much needed funding."

The mission of the Division of Ecological Restoration is to restore and protect the Commonwealth's rivers, wetlands and watersheds for the benefit of people and the environment.

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) is responsible for promoting the conservation and enjoyment of the Commonwealth's natural resources. DFG carries out this mission through land protection and wildlife habitat management, management of inland and marine fish and wildlife species, and ecological restoration of fresh water, salt water, and terrestrial habitats. DFG promotes enjoyment of the Massachusetts environment through outdoor skills workshops, fishing festivals and other educational programs, and by enhancing access to the Commonwealth's rivers, lakes, and coastal waters.

